

Message Text

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60

ACTION NEA-09

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8476

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, TS

SUBJECT: HABIB ACHOUR DISCUSSES AFL-CIO RELATIONS
WITH ICFTU

REF: TUNIS 1491

1. VISITING NEA LABOR ADVISOR AND EMBASSY OFFICER
CALLED ON ACHOUR MARCH 14 AND DISCUSSED, AMONG OTHER
SUBJECTS, ACHOUR'S STATEMENTS REPORTED IN REFTEL. UGTT
LEADER REITERATED THOSE REMARKS, EMPHASIZING WHAT HE
REGARDED AS THE WEAK POSITION OF FREE TRADE UNIONISM
VIS-A-VIS COMMUNIST ORIENTED ORGANIZATIONS. HE ALSO
DECLARED THAT HE HAS THE HIGHEST REGARD FOR THE AFO-CIO
AND PRESIDENT MEANY WHICH GOES BACK TO TIME WHEN
TUNISIAN STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE RECEIVED THEIR AID.
ACHOUR SAID THAT HE WOULD WELCOME OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT
MEANY IN WASHINGTON TO EXPLAIN THE URGENCY OF THE
SITUATION AND THE GREAT NEED FOR AFL-CIO REAFFIRMATION
TO ICFTU. HE THEN REPEATED STATEMENT REPORTED IN
REFTEL THAT IF AFL-CIO DOES NOT REAFFILIATE, ICFTU WILL
BE OBLIGED TO CONSIDER MEANY WAS SOMEONE WHO DAMAGES
THE LABOR MOVEMENT.

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2. NEA LABOR ADVISOR POINTED OUT THAT AFL-CIO HAS SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT REAFFILIATION WITH ICFTU BECAUSE OF THE RELATIONSHIPS OF SOME OF ITS MOST IMPORTANT AFFILIATES WITH COMMUNIST LABOR ORGANIZATIONS. ACHOUR SAID THAT HE KNEW THIS VERY WELL AND ADDED THAT AFL-CIO IS NOT THE ONLY ORGANIZATION OPPOSED TO THESE CONTACTS. HE EXPRESSED OPINION THAT AFL-CIO MIGHT SUCCESSFULLY DEMAND CESSATION OF CONTACT WITH COMMUNIST ORGANIZATIONS AS THE PRICE OF ITS REAFFILIATION.

3. COMMENT: ACHOUR REGARDS HIMSELF AS A CLOSE FRIEND OF AFL-CIO AND NO DOUBT BELIEVES THAT HE IS SPEAKING IN THAT CONTEXT. HE SHOWED GREAT CONCERN FOR THE PLIGHT OF FREE TRADE UNIONISM AND APPEARED CONVINCED THAT AFL-CIO REAFFILIATION TO ICFTU WILL AID CAUSE. HIS OFFER TO DISCUSS ISSUE DIRECTLY WITH AFL-CIO MAKES IT APPEAR THAT THIS OLD KERKENNAH FISHERMAN IS LOOKING FOR AN INVITATION.
END COMMENT.
SEELYE

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